

## **Family Services Review Commission Meeting**

**June 7, 2007**

**HSB-252**

**Members present:** Doreen Binder, Jessica Chanay, Diane Cohen-Alpert, Shirley Kaping, Peggy Kennerly (VCON), Mavel Morales, Rob Potter, and Angela Sanchez.

**Members excused:** Maggie Bagon, Kim Freeman, Rosemary Lazzari, and Michael Ware

**Members absent:** Bonnie Davidson and Miranda Herrera

**DHS staff present:** Ramona Foley, Jim Neely, Dave Lyda, and Nancy Sathrum

**Administrative Handouts, sent via email prior to the meeting:** Meeting Agenda, Draft Minutes of the May 3, 2007 FSRC Meeting, DHS Summary of Complaints Report for April 2007 and Degree Completion Initiative (DCI) Update

**Additional Administrative Handouts at meeting:** List of Self Sufficiency Program Legislative Bills as of 6/4/07, April 2007 CAF Public Assistance Caseload Statistics, Self-Sufficiency at a Glance for April 2007, 2008 FSRC Meeting Schedule, HB 2469-A and -18 Amendments, and TANF Time Limit Update

### **Greeting and Roll Call:**

Meeting called to order at 9:05 a.m. with a membership quorum in attendance. Introductions were made around the table. Peggy Kennerly participated by video conference.

**Director's Report:** Dr. Bruce Goldberg – Unable to attend due to legislative conflict.

### **Chair Report:**

- Action and follow-up items: None outstanding
- Approval of Minutes:
  - Doreen Binder motioned and Shirley Kaping seconded the approval of the May 3, 2007 FSRC meeting minutes as written. Vote of approval was unanimous.
- Commission membership status: Per the Governor's Office, the two non-participating members' appointments won't be dismissed until replacements are found. Jessica and Mavel agreed to meet as an Ad hoc committee on recruitment. **ACTION:** They will give a progress report at our next meeting.
- VCON: Nancy needs to know 2½ weeks prior to meeting if members plan to participate by video conferencing.

### **CAF Report, Ramona Foley, Jim Neely, and Dave Lyda:**

**TANF Reauthorization, discuss status of TANF bill, revised TANF regulations and TANF policy changes:**

TANF Reauthorization, HB 2469: The -18 amendments were sent out electronically. Technical/clean up amendments, -22, are in process. Transitional medical date has changed to July 2008 in A-18, and would change to October 2008 under A-23. Deprivation changes were made to allow more hours of contact per week with absent parent. Have the suggestions of the TANF Oversight Committee been addressed? The guidelines of the Oversight Committee are fairly well intact. Changes were made to allow for the child support pass through beginning in October 2008.

**ACTION:** Dave to provide information on the family increase amount to FSRC. The proposed grant increase for TANF cash assistance would take effect July 1, 2007. The amount was based on 3.1 percent for the 2007-2009 biennium and represents about \$12 per case per month. The proposed increase for a family of three is \$14 per month. This would bring the new monthly payment standard plus cooperation incentive to \$528 (\$485 + \$43).

A handout was distributed on TANF time limits. The process continues as discussed at earlier meetings. Some clients are re-engaging in the program.

There will be differences on how time limits will be handled in HB 2469 as compared to current policy. HB 2469 creates a state time limit (similar to but also different from the federal time limits). HB 2469 stops the clock for clients with hardship status and allows them to return even if they've exceeded 60 months. This will also affect people coming into Oregon's program from another state. The hardship conditions are included in the time limits letter. State-only SSI will not count against the 5 year limit. If clients are participating, we don't anticipate that many clients will reach the 60 month time limit. There is no maximum amount of months a client can qualify for a hardship on the state side.

Letters being sent out reflect the current policy. What will happen when the law changes? When the law passes, new information to explain the differences will be sent to all clients who have previously received the time limit letter. New letter should state that this information rescinds all previous letters sent to client. We have heard that field offices aren't receiving many calls on the time limits letter. Jessica supports waiting until law has passed and policy is in place to send out additional time limit letters. Dave believes letters should continue to go out, with follow-up information sent to clients when the bill passes.

Diane has heard that DHS caseworkers in Multnomah County are contacting clients regarding the time limits letter. The first clients to meet the time limits will be in July of 2008. Discussion continued on different ways to handle time limit notification since it will change with the passage of HB 2469. The new statute will most likely become effective on October 1, 2007. That will leave nine months before the first clients reach the time limits. Under the new law, adults may fall off program, but child grant would continue if adults

are participating. The new bill will have a positive effect on clients. When the bill passes, emergency rules will be filed.

Diane mentioned that Multnomah County thinks that a public service announcement should be made to explain the time limits. Jessica felt a public service announcement may be confusing and still not reach the appropriate clients. After further discussion the group decided not to pursue this. Doreen feels it's important to follow-up one-on-one with clients. The time limit letter states that clients have reached 42 months, so they have 1½ years of benefits remaining; it also lists the exemptions and asks them to contact their caseworker. Will additional letters be sent to clients at one year and/or six months prior to 60 month limit? One-on-one contact, caseworker to client, is critical. Ramona felt that we have to continue treating clients the same, so letters should go out with added language that laws may change based on pending legislation.

Caseworker training was discussed. Training will take place around the state this summer and continue in the mandatory new worker training. Information will be sent to caseworkers to clarify how they should discuss the issue with clients and to let them know that state-only child cases will not close. Will supervisors be responsible for ensuring that time limit information goes out to all front line staff? Jim and Ramona spoke recently at the District Manager's meeting and gave the message that changes need to take place. Data will improve as coding changes are made. District Managers are encouraged to further discuss the changes with caseworkers who may not fully understand policy. Red flags that appear regarding universal access to benefits need to be addressed.

Diane brought a copy of a Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) article entitled "Improving Access to Education and Training for TANF Participants" that discusses a new program that will require teen education participation during school breaks (Christmas break, spring break and summers). **ACTION:** Put on future agenda for discussion. **ACTION:** Nancy will scan and send electronically. **(Done 6/8/07)** APHSA is collecting comments. Bruce is the new policy chair for APHSA. He has quickly developed a very good reputation and garners good support across the country.

Another large education-related issue is that homework time must be supervised by a third party. There are many things in the new regulations that will be difficult. Vic is compiling a list of TANF issues.

There is a DCI update in the meeting packet for your review. A few clarification questions were discussed. Clients can only be in the program for 12 months. When the program isn't full, clients that aren't in their last year of school may be considered for acceptance. The number of "not approved" is the total from the beginning of the program. Can the numbers be broken down by reason for denial? **ACTION:** Dave will try to get these numbers for the next meeting update. **(Provided below)**

**DCI Denial Reasons**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Application Incomplete and No Response to Request for Additional Information	92	33.0%
School Not Accredited	41	14.7%
During Times When Wait List in Effect, More than 12 Months	41	14.7%
Applicant Not Applying for or Receiving TANF	34	12.2%
Not a Two or Four Year Degree Program	23	8.2%
More than 24 Months to Complete	21	7.5%
Not Enrolled Full-Time	18	6.5%
Other	9	3.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The DHS budget is the largest that hasn't been passed. Bruce is encouraged that we will have necessary funding for our programs.

**Grievance Report, review and comment on grievances:** The grievance reports will no longer include child welfare complaints. No comments or questions.

**FSRC Committees/DHS Partnerships:**

- Legislative Committee: Discuss recent activities:
  - Joint Ways and Means Committee budget letter – This committee met a few times, prepared letters and provided testimony at public hearings. Thank you for responding to the letter for the last HB 2469 public hearing.
  - Discuss next steps: Begin a few months prior to annual session to prepare for issues that will be addressed.
  
- Partnership Committees: Discuss recent activities:
  - Child Welfare Advisory Committee – Diane Cohen-Alpert  
Diane will attend the CWAC meeting on Wednesday, 6/13/07. The TANF time limit letter and the Oregon Safety Model were discussed at the NCAN conference in Portland last month.
  - Advisory Committee on OAR related to threats of violence – Peggy Kennerly  
The second meeting was held and good input has been taken back to the committee. There seems to be a difference of opinion regarding Voc Rehab clients. They will be looking at what different programs allow/disallow as far as firing clients and seeking legal input from AG's office to include more policy language to protect clients. The

original draft's focus was primarily on staff safety, not the client's needs and safety. They thought this would be a quick policy but new issues are coming up that may delay the redraft. Mavel's comments were very helpful. The next meeting hasn't been scheduled. Peggy will continue to share drafts as they are prepared. There is good partnership working on the policy redraft. Thank you to Peggy for agreeing to participate in work group.

- Customer/Client Regulation Development Project – Angela Sanchez  
This committee has held three meetings which Angela attended by video conference. The work of this group is complete. Thank you to Angela for participating and sharing her real life experience as a front-line field office employee.
- Customer Service Committee: Jessica suggested forming a Customer Service sub-committee to review complaint reports and bring issues to the FSRC as necessary.  
**ACTION:** Rob to send email to FSRC members to see who would like to participate and request names of community partners for participation. Add topic to August FSRC agenda.
- Family Support Work Group – Maggie Bagon, not in attendance.  
TANF work groups are being developed to address issues in bill. Ask Vic if people can still be added to the work groups.

Some members asked that items discussed at meetings be voted on to arrive at and record a consensus. Any FSRC member can move for a vote on any issue. Vote will take place outside of DHS management attendance. Members may also decide to table the issue to a future meeting agenda or vote via email. A record of the formal vote needs to be retained for minutes and/or files. The vote will be made on a specific motion and second. It was suggested that the FSRC use the Roberts Rule of Order.

FSRC topics will be on the agenda at 8:30 a.m. so they can be discussed prior to DHS joining the meeting. It would be helpful if information is provided prior to the meeting so members come prepared for discussion.

The July 5<sup>th</sup> FSRC meeting has been canceled.

Next Meeting: The next FSRC meeting is scheduled for August 2, 2007, 8:30 a.m. to noon, in HSB-252. Please let Nancy know if you plan to attend by Video Conferencing or phone by Wednesday, July 18th.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.